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ABSTRACT

The College of Education, Ohio University, in coordination with the Center for International Studies utilizes several strategies for developing global competency in preservice teachers. This paper outlines three of these approaches: (1) two academic courses, an undergraduate elective entitled "Learning from Non-Western Cultures" and an undergraduate/graduate course called "Teaching Strategies for Cross Cultural and International Understanding," an orientation for overseas student teaching; (2) a non-credit seminar, "Toward a Peaceful World" provided by the Ohio Valley International Council, is designed to bring together American and international students to discuss sensitive political issues; and (3) "Teacher Education in Swaziland," a work/study program designed to take second and third year teacher education majors to Swaziland to join in teaching practice with their Swazi counterparts. Based upon these strategies, it is concluded that educating globally competent teachers ideally involves personal acquaintance and experience of a specific culture in a specific place, confrontation with diverse points of view, and acquisition of skills in the application of knowledge and in discerning linkages between places, peoples, and disciplines. It is also pointed out that global competence can be acquired without overseas experience if teachers seek out personal contacts with those from other cultures. (LL)

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Educating Globally Competent Teachers

A Paper presented at the CIEE Annual Conference
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In the February, 1991, Atlantic, Wendell Berry tells us that we have to "get out of our cars, off our horses and walk the ground where we are." He says that "our present leaders, the people of wealth and power, do not know what it means to take a place seriously -- to think it worthy, for its own sake, of love and study and careful work. This lack of attention to particular places," he continues, "leads us to abstraction - an inability to distinguish one place from another, one person or creature from another" (p.62). He asks us to think and act locally, for only in so doing can we do what is right for the planet.

Although Berry claims that he is against global thinking, his ideas can set the parameters for the education of globally competent teachers. Global competence must begin at home in a specific place and continue with the personal acquaintance and experience of a culture different than one's own.

A Pegagogy of Place

David Orr (1992), in a provocative book entitled Ecological Literacy, makes a case for a "pedagogy of place." He justifies such a pedagogy on the grounds that place is defined on a human scale. He states that place is "nebulous to educators because to a great extent we are a deplaced people for whom our immediate places are no longer sources of food, water, livelihood, energy, materials, friends, recreation or sacred inspiration. We consume a great deal of time and energy going somewhere else" (p.126).

Those of us who are international educators by definition

go out, go abroad, and learn about places other than our own. If we are to really take seriously the charge of educating globally competent teachers, we must learn to come back home and to bring the world with us.

Orr gives four reasons for integrating place into education:

1. The study of place "requires the combination of intellect with experience." It involves "complementary dimensions of intellect: direct observation, investigation, experimentation, and skill in the application of knowledge" (p. 128).

2. The study of place is an antidote to overspecialization. "A place has a human history and a geologic past: it is part of an ecosystem with a variety of microsystems, it is a landscape with a particular flora and fauna. Its inhabitants are part of a social, economic and political order: they import and export energy, materials, water and wastes, they are linked by innumerable bonds to other places. A place is a complex mosiac of phenomena and problems" (p.129).

3. The study of place has the potential of "reeducating people in the art of living well where they are." Good inhabitance requires "detailed knowledge of a place, the capacity for observation, and a sense of care and rootedness" (p.130).

4. The study of place involves the ability to perceive and utilize the potentials of a place and the development of an ethic about habitat (p. 131).

Globally competent teachers must develop this sense of place

and of relationships between places in an intensely personal way. They must learn new or alternative ways of seeing and ways of knowing. They must learn how to solve problems in a multicultural context, in a collaborative fashion, taking advantage of diversity rather than fearing it. In order to foster this kind of global competence, teacher educators must assess the available resources in their universities and communities and make decisions as to how these can be most successfully applied to the task of producing citizens who are knowledgeable about the world.

As teacher educators we must learn to bring the world to our students in a way that can be heard and understood. We must listen to those that we have been taught have nothing to say: women, minorities, persons in the so-called developing world. We must learn to see what we have been taught not to see. If we wish to educate globally competent teachers, those of us in the university must come down from our ivory towers and listen and learn from the foreign students and scholars in our midst, the returned Peace Corps volunteers, members of religious organizations, local businesspersons and those who make up the more than 18,000 transnational voluntary organizations. We must teach ourselves and our students to discover patterns of connection between the local and the global communities of which we are a part.

The Art of Exploration

The Little Prince in his wanderings among planets arrived at

a planet where he encountered a geographer. When the Little Prince asked, "What is a geographer?", his host replied,

> "A geographer is a scholar who knows the location of all the seas, rivers, towns, mountains, and deserts."
>
> "Your planet is very beautiful. Has it any oceans?"
>
> "I couldn't tell you, said the geographer."
>
> "And towns and rivers, and deserts?"
>
> "I couldn't tell you that, either."
>
> "But you are a geographer!"
>
> "Exactly," the geographer said, "but I am not an explorer. It is not the geographer who goes out to count the towns, the rivers, the mountains, the seas, the oceans, and the deserts. The geographer is much too important to go loafing about. He does not leave his desk." (Saint-Exupery, pp. 51-53)

Globally competent teachers must be explorers who leave their desks. They must be able to describe the towns, the rivers, the mountains around them and to bring together other explorers who know of different towns and mountains to share their knowledge and solve problems collectively.

If we are to produce teachers who are explorers and have a sense of place, we must enlist allies in both the university and the community. Following are three strategies for global competency which are currently utilized at Ohio University in its College of Education and through its Center for International Studies. All involve a "pedagogy of place" and a commitment to the notion of the community as the world and as a vehicle for teaching and learning. All send students to experience the world, interpret what they find, and share the experience for a

wider impact. All are designed to take students out of their comfort zones.

Strategies

The first approach includes two academic courses: a) an undergraduate education elective entitled "Learning from Non-Western Cultures" and b) an undergraduate/graduate course called "Teaching Strategies for Cross Cultural and International Understanding."

The second is the Ohio Valley International Council (OVIC), the international community outreach program through the Center for International Studies to the K-12 community, which involves the utilization of international students and scholars and returned Peace Corps volunteers as classroom resources. A centerpiece of OVIC's activities is a non-credit seminar, "Toward a Peaceful World," designed to bring together American and international students to discuss sensitive political issues.

The third is "Teacher Education in Swaziland," a unique study/work program which takes undergraduate teacher education majors to Swaziland in their sophomore or junior years to join in "teaching practice" with Swazi counterparts.

Learning from Non-Western Cultures

The intention of this course is to "stimulate a more intimate view of non-western cultures. The goal is to understand how cultural barriers are built and broken through practical experience and interaction as well as develop students' sensitivity to views of the world that are starkly at odds with

their own. An important vehicle for developing this understanding is the experience of teachers in non-western societies. According to the instructor, "Teachers have served throughout history and across cultures as mediators of cross-cultural dialogue" (Howard, 1992).

Readings for the course include works by people from the West immersed in their first encounter with non-Western societies, who describe how they learn how to learn in these contexts. The course also examines works by persons from non-Western societies describing their own culture or their first contact with the West.

Class activites include: a) journal keeping, b) contextualization and critical assessment of non-Western literature, c) interviews and social interaction with members of non-Western cultures studying at Ohio University, d) learning how to utilize cultural informants through joint planning of a World Hunger Day at a local middle school, and e) becoming aware of avenues for exercising personal civic responsibility at the global level through reading Bridging the Global Gap (Benjamin and Freedman, 1989). Recruitment for "Teacher Education in Swaziland" also takes place in this class.

Some thirty sophomore students per year enroll in "Learning from Non-Western Cultures." It is required only of students pursuing an alternative certification track. It is unfortunate that all pre-service teachers are not exposed to the world in this way.

Teaching Strategies for Cross Cultural and International Understanding

This course is offered in different format at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The undergraduate course serves as an orientation for overseas student teaching through the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) of which Ohio University is a member. It also requires students to think about how that experience can be integrated into their professional life upon return.

The course begins with the reading of Althen's (1988) American Ways and a consideration of how teachers might communicate the ethos of American culture to foreigners. Each classmember is asked to design a culture kit, which will portray for a non-American audience some facet of life in the United States. The undergraduates are also introduced to the various stages of culture shock and given strategies for learning how to learn in an unfamiliar setting.

Students do briefings on the countries to which they have been assigned to teach, focusing especially on its educational system. They utilize Salinger's (1993) "The Intercultural Traveler" as an outline for the briefing and interview someone who is either native to or has lived for an extended period in their host country.

At the graduate level, the course provides American in-service teachers with an introduction to various theoretical frameworks for adding a global perspective to their current curriculum: community-based global education, development

education, and area studies. The participating teachers design a unit of study which incorporates one or more of these frameworks and utilizes a cultural informant. An international graduate student at Ohio University comes to the teachers' classrooms and small communities in Southeast Ohio for three days as the unit is taught. Area briefings are provided to the teachers prior to the experience. Teachers learn first-hand about the cultures of their visitors through hosting them in their homes.

The course introduces classmembers to resources in their own communities, such as the Ohio Valley International Council, which can help them bring the world home to their students and through which they can gain a global perspective themselves. During the course teachers are also made aware of opportunities for overseas experience for which they might apply.

The Ohio Valley International Council

The Ohio Valley International Council (OVIC) provides human and material resources for understanding world cultures and global issues. Over the past ten years OVIC has trained and sent hundreds of international students, scholars and returned Peace Corps volunteers into the schools of the Ohio Valley as cultural informants. Wherever possible OVIC promotes multiple visits of the resource person to the same classroom. With sustained interaction it becomes possible to get past stereotyping and confront real cultural differences.

OVIC also maintains a teacher resource center which includes culture kits from approximately twenty cultures which

contain everyday objects and print and auddiovisual materials. OVIC also conducts teacher workshops and in-service.

OVIC annually sponsors "Towards a Peaceful World," an interdisciplinary, cross cultural seminar now in its seventh year. This seminar brings together American and international students to address sensitive political issues. A different theme is chosen each year. Participants consistently evaluate the seminar as one of the most powerful learning experiences of their lives.

The features of the seminar include:

1. A week-end retreat in which the thirty participants live and play together as well as engage in serious intellectual exchange.

2. A focus on controversial topics with emotional charge, such as Dealing with International Terrorism, Human Rights, Religious Fundamentalism, and the Experience of Being a Minority. Background readings come from a wide range of cultural perspectives. Participants are not expected to be neutral or uninvolved emotionally. Although the American educational system attempts to remove emotional affect from the classroom, these seminars have demonstrated that the careful discussion of strongly emotional issues produces intense learning.

3. Participants in each seminar represent a mix of age, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. Graduates and undergraduates, American and international students provide varying levels of sophistication and insight, but all learn from

each other.

A follow-up meeting extends the experience when the international students are teamed with American student participants to present a program addressing the topic of the seminar at each of Ohio University's five regional campuses, which do not share the extensive international resources of the main campus.

Teacher Education in Swaziland

The genesis of Ohio University's undergraduate student exchange with Ngwane Teachers College in Nhlangano, Swaziland, lies in the long history of Ohio University's participation in African educational development. Many Ohio University faculty have spent time in several African countries teaching, planning and executing projects in educational development. Unfortunately there has been little transference of this experience to undergraduate students on the Athens campus. Teacher education students miss a unique opportunity to benefit from the experiences of large numbers of faculty in their college and increase their awareness of the issues that confront the majority of the world's people.

Teacher Education in Swaziland grew out of a desire to extend the benefits of Ohio University's College of Education contract with the Agency for International Development (USAID) to upgrade teacher education in the Kingdom of Swaziland. A Linkage Agreement between the Kingdom of Swaziland, Ohio University, and USAID was signed in which undergraduate students were able to attend classes at Ngwane Teachers College and to join Swazi pre-

service teachers in their "teaching practice". In June and July, 1994, the fourth group of six to eight undergraduate students will go to Swaziland.

Activities of the program include:

1. Peer learning and team teaching. Despite the brevity of the exchange, the students learn a great deal by being in constant contact with the host culture through direct participation in the daily work environment.

2. Utilization of both Swazi students at Ohio University and returnees from the Swazi exchange to orient students for the following year's program. The Swazi students' role is tempered with other perspectives to offset the rosy picture of their homeland they tend to paint. Because they are studying in the U.S., these students may in no way be typical, particularly representative, or have a broad overview of their country. This is a potential problem with the use of cultural informants, in general.

3. A follow-up which allows students to extend and integrate their experience. Returnees from the program are required to apply what they have learned through the sharing of their experience in the local schools during the year following the exchange.

4. A visit by two to three Ngwane faculty to Ohio University each spring in order to observe U.S. schools and teacher education first-hand.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a particularly amenable setting

for involving American students in the developing world. It is a small country. English is widely spoken. It is culturally homogeneous. Since Swaziland is in the southern hemisphere, its schools are in session in the summer when American students are most available. The program has proven attractive to minority students.

According to the program's director (Howard, 1991), the exchange has broad implications for study abroad programs in general. "The success of this exchange signals that we need to look for work opportunities, perhaps in some cases volunteer work with non-governmental organizations, as we set up overseas study programs for academic credit." Howard also observed that the presence of Afro-American students in the Ohio University group provided an opportunity to demonstrate the relationship between multicultural and international education.

From exit interviews with the students the director noted that, "it was clear that the students began to think in global terms about the experience and generalized beyond their personal feelings... Several of them described issues in Swazi education, for example, in terms that reflected the society's challenges - class size, use of mother tongue in instruction, the fragmented curriculum," rather than simply reiterating their own classroom experience. Organizers of the program are now considering the impact on Ngwane College of this influx of Americans for six weeks, and the impact on the Swazi children in the practice classrooms.

Conclusions

The above examples of strategies for educating globally competent teachers offer several insights:

1. Global competence begins with personal acquaintance and experience of a specific culture in a specific place.

2. Global competence involves confrontation with diverse points of view. Just because international and American students inhabit the same classrooms or the same living space doesn't necessarily mean that they will interact with each other on more than a superficial level. We, as educators, have to facilitate this interaction at every possible juncture.

3. Global competence involves the whole person, not just the intellect. Confronting issues with high emotional content allow us to get at real differences between cultures.

4. While global competence involves acquiring specific knowledge, it also requires the acquisition of skills in application of knowledge and in discerning linkages between places, peoples, and disciplines. Work experience is especially useful in this regard.

5. Global competence can be acquired without overseas experience. As Wilson (1993) has demonstrated, international experience can change a teacher's life and have a multiplier effect through myriad classroom contacts. But most teachers will never leave the United States. Those fortunate few who are able to physically go to another culture must learn the skills to bring the experience back to the campus, classroom and community.

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The majority, those unable to go themselves, must be encouraged to acquaint themselves with the world in which they live through personal contact and significant interaction with those from other cultures as well as through the links with other cultures that are increasingly available through communications technology.

We can no longer afford global illiteracy among the teachers of our young. We have the means to educate globally competent teachers if we have the wit and the will to use them.

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